

**In the Abstract:**

Please replace the "Abstract" section with the following amended paragraph as follows:

**ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE**

~~A method and apparatus for the ionization of destroying living cells where an optical device (14) delivers an, the cells being characterized by an ionization threshold, the method comprises providing at least one optical pulse having an optical field power smaller than the ionization threshold of the cells while generating conditions for which is modified locally increasing the by an optical field power per unit area beyond modifying means (18) to effect the ionization threshold of the cells, thereby destroying the cells via ionization and destruction of living cells (16).~~